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## Ground broken for new Paul's Boutique cultivation facility in North Windham

By Ed Pierce

It's taken an extraordinary amount of preparation and patience to ensure that his business will be successful, but Shaw Dwight of Paul's Boutique can see light at the end of the tunnel. Earlier this month, ground was broken for a new 12,500-square-foot cannabis cultivation and manufacturing facility for Paul's Boutique off Enterprise Drive in the Enterprise Development District Zone of North Windham.

Paul's Boutique was established in 2015 by Dwight and his Julia and was one of two businesses to receive an adult-use retail marijuana license by the Windham Town Council in October 2020. After clearing numerous regulatory hurdles from the state and obtaining a license from the town council, Dwight felt investing in the new cultivation and manufacturing facility was the right step to move the company forward.



Owner Shaw Dwight, left, and Cultivation Manager Michael Tillman review blueprints for the new 12,500-square-foot Paul's Boutique cultivation and manufacturing facility under construction in the Enterprise Development District Zone of North Windham. PHOTO BY ED PIERCE

Once completed this fall it will join Paul's other existing three commercial facilities and Dwight expects to hire additional employees from the local community, bringing the total number employed by Paul's Boutique to 35.

In addition to the new facility, Dwight is in the process of remodeling his medical marijuana storefront on Route 302 in North Windham to better accommodate adult-use customers once the business launches retail sales.

"We could not be prouder to break ground on our new 12,500-square-foot cultivation/manufacturing facility located in the ED Zone of North Windham," Dwight said. "This entire process for our new cultivation center has been both a challenging and rewarding task, from land acquisition/development to the construction phase that we are entering now."

He said that the new facility will be a state-of-the-art, 'zero waste' facility for which Paul's Boutique has spared no expense.

"While most cultivation facilities present major hurdles and impacts on the environment, my wife and I are extremely passionate about the environment and choose to lead by example by incorporating green solutions into our entire business model," Dwight said. "This cultivation facility will be no different and will reflect our mission to keep our carbon footprint low."

To accomplish that, they are striving to reduce their electrical consumption at the new cultivation and manufacturing facility by working with EEM (Energy Efficiency Maine) to reduce their impact two-fold.

"Our LED lighting requires less of an electrical load and less cooling," Dwight said. "We are also using specialty dehumidifiers designed to run more efficiently, by adding cooling abilities, while heat generated is pushed outside with pad mount condensers."

According to Dwight, water conservation is another factor that Paul's Boutique has weighed given the taxing nature of water consumption in the cannabis industry.

"Our ARCS (Automated Reclaimed Condensate System) will recycle and treat more than 80 percent of water use, allowing us to conserve somewhere in the ballpark of a half a million gallons per year," he said. "Nutrient run-off or leach water is laden in nitrates and phosphates. These fertilizers are usually flushed down the drain, leaving the municipal water districts to deal with them. In other cases, these fertilizers are flushed into a septic system which in turn ends up in the water table/groundwater. Our evaporator system will handle this by steam reduction, then a waste management company will pick up the 'sludge' quarterly or biannually to dispose of safely and appropriately."

Larry Eliason, a commercial broker with Butts Commercial Brokers in Raymond, brokered the deal to bring the Paul's Boutique cultivation and manufacturing facility to the Business Park ED Zone of North Windham.

"Frankly, I think Shaw Dwight, owner of Paul's, recognized an opportunity to expand his business and he took action," Eliason said. "There have really been no commercial land sales in that business park for many years. The biggest reason for investment in the business park today is the Town of Windham Planning Department and the Windham Town Council designated the Enterprise Development District as one of two locations in Windham specifically Zoned for Growing, Processing and Manufacturing Adult Use and/or Medical Cannabis."

Eliason said that the commercial lot that Paul's Boutique chose for the facility has been there for years, but recent zoning changes approved and implemented by the Windham Town Council in the past year have been instrumental in attracting new investment to this business park.

Dwight said that the new cultivation facility will allow Paul's Boutique to continue expanding its company and bringing great jobs to Windham while infusing the local economy.

"We plan to hire 15 new employees prior to opening the doors while paying solid living wages to all our staff," he said. "I was appointed to the Marijuana Task Force for Windham, in which we helped educate and navigate Windham's Adult Use and Medical Cannabis Ordinance."

Site work is well under way for the project with steel frames having been installed and extensive grading and leveling for the grounds continuing. John Bell of Patco Construction is serving as general contractor with civil engineering guidance provided by Craig Burgess of Sebago Technics.

"We are thrilled to be working with local builders and Jon Bell from Patco Construction to present this grand vision, a model for future cannabis cultivation," Dwight said. Windham has a big place in our hearts, and we are very thankful to operate in this great town. Paul's Boutique strives to set the bar high, respect the environment in which we live, give back to the community which we operate in, and patronize local business to fuel the Sebago Lake Region's economy." <

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